



SIERRA LEONE

EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Communities at the heart of our work

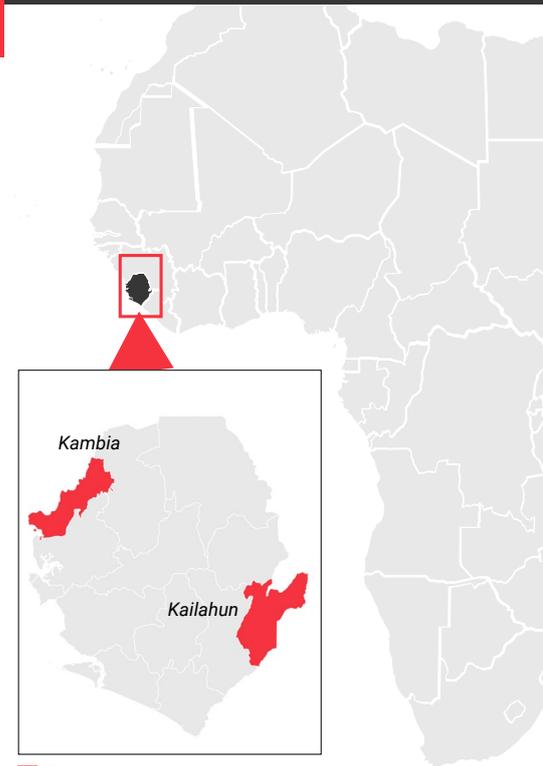
Epidemics begin and end in communities. When communities are engaged and trained in epidemic preparedness and response, they can stop outbreaks and ultimately save lives.

Early detection, early action

Sierra Leone has one of the lowest life expectancy in the world in addition to having one of the highest mortality rates for children under five years of age. Six of the top ten causes of death in Sierra Leone are related to infectious diseases. Acute watery diarrhea, measles, viral haemorrhagic fevers and rabies are among some of the most critical health concerns in the country. It was only six years ago that the country faced the worst Ebola outbreak in history, which killed almost 4,000 people in Sierra Leone alone.

Sierra Leone Red Cross, with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and funding from USAID, has been helping communities prepare and prevent the spread of diseases, including Acute watery diarrhea, measles and viral haemorrhagic fevers. Focusing in Kailahun and Kambia, Sierra Leone Red Cross is working with governments, communities, local responders and humanitarian partners to collectively prepare for and respond to epidemics.

Sierra Leone Red Cross is providing critical information, community-based surveillance and referrals in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Ministry of Education to help stop diseases from spreading before an outbreak occurs.



■ Programme focus areas

74

traditional healers trained to provide critical information in the community on how to prevent and detect outbreaks.

1,200

households reached with critical health messaging to prevent, detect and respond to diseases.

200+

volunteers trained in epidemic control, community-based health and first aid.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

OUR WORK



Preparing communities

We are ensuring communities have critical information about the spread of diseases and how to prevent them, systems to detect outbreaks and mechanisms that ensure information sharing and community engagement. Activities include:

- Engaging communities through house-to-house visits, mobile cinemas and group discussions.
- Strengthening community-based surveillance systems.
- Engaging, training and collaborating with community influencers, such as teachers, leaders and traditional healers.



Preparing first responders

Sierra Leone Red Cross has more than 16,000 volunteers across the country which gives extraordinary reach into communities. In their supporting role to the government, they are often central to emergency responses amid outbreaks. Activities include:

- Contingency planning with government and key partners.
- Strengthening systems to enable a fast, scaled-up response.
- Strengthening partnerships with different sectors and ministries.
- Training and readying community-based volunteers.



Preparing stakeholders

Epidemics not only threaten lives but all aspects of society, including trade, transportation and education. We work with a variety of key stakeholders and the media in epidemic preparedness and response. Activities include:

- Helping prepare a variety of sectors to respond (including those affected by both animal and human health).
- Training media to communicate lifesaving information to affected populations.
- Engaging, training and collaborating with schools, teachers and students through school clubs on critical epidemic preparedness messages and referrals.



Working together in Animal and human health to tackle future outbreaks

IFRC and Sierra Leone Red Cross have trained over 200 volunteers, government and key partners to better understand epidemic preparedness and community-based surveillance to better prepare for future outbreaks. Participants from the Ministries of Health and Agriculture have said the training is "all-inclusive" and encourages reporting in real-time by the community.

“The CBS training was an eye-opener for me. It has taught me how to work collaboratively with other sectors such as the Ministry of Health to protect both human and animal health in my community.”

- Kadiatu Jalloh, community animal health worker, Madina, Sierra Leone

More information: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/community-epidemic-pandemic-preparedness>

Follow us: twitter.com/ifrc | facebook.com/ifrc | instagram.com/ifrc | youtube.com/ifrc